

significant bond of Polish culture, heritage and history in Cleveland and across the country. The group serves as a unifying force for both Polish Americans and Polish citizens living in America. Taking a positive stand on issues concerning the people of Poland, the group strives to attain a free market economy within the framework of a democratic society.

The goal of the Polish American Congress is to make Americans of Polish heritage more successful U.S. citizens by encouraging them to assume the responsibilities of citizenship. In addition, the group supports fraternal, professional, religious, and civic associations dedicated to the improvement of the status of all Americans of Polish heritage. The Polish American Congress has played a crucial role in the Polish community, and in its many years of support and service has been an invaluable contribution to the city of Cleveland and beyond.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and celebration of the leaders and members of the Polish American Congress, as they celebrate Polish Constitution Day and as they continue to promote and protect the heritage, history and culture of their beloved Polish homeland—providing awareness and connection to every new generation born in America, and enriching the diverse fabric of our entire Cleveland community.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 18, 2006*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5386) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to Interior appropriations bill and in support of the Putnam/Capps amendment that will be considered on the floor today.

For 25 years we have maintained a bipartisan agreement to ban any new drilling off our shores because we believed it was more important to safeguard the health and beauty of our coastal environment for future generations to enjoy.

But now the Interior appropriations bill threatens to upset this agreement and open our coastal areas to drilling despite overwhelming opposition from the American people.

We should not be trading away our pristine coastal habitats to fatten the coffers of the administration's cronies in the oil and gas industry.

The fact of the matter is that new offshore drilling will do nothing in the short term to reduce the high gas prices that consumers are facing at pump, and will do nothing in the long term to wean us away from our addiction to oil.

The best way to fight high gas prices now is to hold oil companies accountable for

gouging consumers by instituting a windfall profits tax.

At the same time, we need to make immediate investments to expand energy efficiency by raising vehicle fuel economy standards, increasing the use of renewable fuels, and by adopting a foreign policy that does not hold our constituents hostage to the latest political crisis in the Middle East.

Today our constituents are paying the price for this administration's deliberate decision to prioritize the profit margins of the oil and gas industry over a comprehensive and sustainable long term energy policy.

Vote against another giveaway to the energy industry. Support the Putnam/Capps amendment and save our coastal environments.

HONORING W. JAMES FARRELL

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today I order to recognize the long and distinguished career of Jim Farrell. Jim retired this month as chairman of Illinois Tool Works, Inc., ITW, after a 41-year career with the company, and has spent a lifetime making a positive impact on the Chicago-area community.

After graduating from the University of Detroit with a degree in electrical engineering, Jim joined ITW in 1965. He originally intended to work there for the few months he had before reporting for military service, but he would ultimately return after 2 years in the Army. Rising steadily through the ranks, Jim served as ITW's chief executive officer from 1995 and chairman from 1996. Based in Glenview, Illinois, the company now operates in 45 countries and employs almost 50,000 people.

As CEO and chairman of a Fortune 200 company, Jim was known for an unusual but highly successful approach. At ITW he oversaw the purchase of more than 200 companies. He resisted the prevailing wisdom to consolidate operations and instead gave the 600 division managers a high degree of autonomy. This allowed Jim to cultivate an environment that remains highly conducive to entrepreneurship and allows managers to stay closely connected to employees and customers.

Jim has always found time and energy to give to the community. For more than a decade he has chaired and worked with the Chicago branch of Junior Achievement, a worldwide organization dedicated to educating young people about business, economics, and free enterprise. In addition to serving on numerous other business and civic boards, Jim also instituted a generous matching policy under which ITW matches \$3 for each \$1 donated to charity by an employee.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Jim for his many successes, I thank him for his role within the business community of Illinois and for his dedication to civic duty, and I wish him and his family the best of luck in all future endeavors.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 18, 2006*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5386) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes:

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I submitted the attached statement, in support of the Putnam-Capps Amendment to ban drilling for natural gas on the Outer Continental Shelf on May 18, 2006.

FLOOR STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE OCS DRILLING BAN AMENDMENT TO THE FY2007 INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL, H.R. 5386

I rise in strong support of this amendment to preserve the popular and longstanding ban on drilling off our coasts. First, let's be clear that there is no such thing as drilling for gas only. Even the Administration and the energy industry have dismissed the idea as unworkable. So this is nothing more than a fig leaf.

But it's a fig leaf that will bring toxic contamination to our marine environment merely three miles off our coasts. And it could open the door to drilling in the Great Lakes, which is also opposed by Great Lakes residents.

We cannot forget that new drilling will have no effect on energy prices for years. In contrast, we have technologies to reduce our addiction to oil and natural gas that are ready to go today. The problem is that we're subsidizing unsustainable energy production like drilling for natural gas and oil while failing to fund real renewable solutions. I urge my colleagues to vote for the amendment.

TRIBUTE TO COMMEMORATE JEWISH AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Jewish American History Month and the contributions made to our country by Jewish Americans. With a culture that strongly values education and community, they have enriched our culture and contributed to the economic and cultural vitality of our Nation. My community in Silicon Valley wouldn't be what it is today without the contributions of Jewish Americans.

Jewish immigrants came to our country, hoping to fulfill their dreams by participating in the American promise of socioeconomic mobility and cultural tolerance. The stories of their successes in our country are greatly inspiring.

Andy Grove, for instance, fled his home in Hungary during the Hungarian Revolution with his family under the cover of night, and immigrated to the United States. From these humble beginnings he eventually became the Chairman and CEO of one of the greatest

economic engines in the world, Intel. Sergey Brin, another innovative Jewish leader, came to America with his family to escape anti-Semitism. Through hard work and diligent studies, he founded one of the most innovative companies in the world: Google.

Examples abound of other Jewish Americans who lead our community in innovation and philanthropy, including Jeffrey Skoll, Ken Levy, Eli Reinhard and Eic Benhamou. America's ethnic diversity is a source of our country's strength, and the Jewish American community stands as a bedrock for our nation.

#### IN SUPPORT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

#### HON. JOHN J.H. "JOE" SCHWARZ

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in support of President Bush's proclamation declaring May 2006 as Jewish American Heritage Month.

Jewish American Heritage Month recognized the wonderful cultural heritage of the Jewish people in America. It will be a time to honor all of the benefits and successes that Jewish Americans have experienced as well as recognizing the achievements and the diversity their culture has provided to the United States.

Jewish American Heritage Month will also provide a venue for education of the Jewish American culture. It allows an opportunity to further educate and ultimately end anti-Semitism for future generations.

Today, I join my colleagues as well as President Bush to establish the month of May to observe and celebrate the rich history of the Jewish people in America and honor the great contributions they have made to our country.

#### TRIBUTE TO DISABLED VETERANS

#### HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, next Monday we will honor all that have made the ultimate sacrifice serving and protecting our country. I rise today to honor our disabled veterans still with us that have sacrificed so much.

On the last Monday of May every year, Members of this body celebrate Memorial Day by walking in parades, making speeches, and talking to active and retired military men and women. We tell them how much we appreciate their efforts and thank them for their services. We do this proudly as they deserve our respect and admiration for serving this great country.

Currently, American troops defend our freedom on many different fronts and veterans are at the forefront of our legislative priorities. The number of veterans coming home from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas increases daily and it is our responsibility to ensure their needs are met. While our veterans may be out of harm's way, our responsibility to them remains.

I am introducing legislation to further our commitment to our disabled veterans that have served our country with valor. Currently, every year Congress enacts a cost-of-living adjustment for veterans' disability benefits. We have done this every year since 1978. In fact, both Congress and the President assume this COLA will be enacted every year.

My legislation, the Veterans Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act, would simply make the COLAs for veterans' disability benefits automatic each year. Veterans should not have to depend on Congress adjusting their disability benefits every year. Social Security and Medicare have automatic COLA adjustments. Our veterans deserve to have that same security. Furthermore, because Congress and the President assume this increase in their budget every year, my bill has no budgetary effect.

I am also pleased to enter into the RECORD letters of support from the Disabled American Veterans as well as American Veterans (AMVETS). These veterans service organizations support this bill to assure veterans the COLA they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot and should not assume future Congresses will act to adjust veterans' disability COLAs every year. I ask my colleagues to join me to ensure our veterans get the benefits they deserve without having to rely on a superfluous yearly act by Congress.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,  
*Washington, DC, May 22, 2006.*

Hon. JOE KNOLLENBERG,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KNOLLENBERG: On behalf of the 1.5 million members of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and its Auxiliary, I write in support of the measure you are introducing today, the Veterans' Disability Compensation Automatic COLA Act.

Your bill would protect the benefits of sick and disabled veterans and their dependents by preserving its intent and beneficial purpose. Specifically, the bill would automatically increase the rates of disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and the annual clothing allowance by the percentage of increase in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index without precluding any other increases deemed necessary in the future.

Other benefits such as automobile and housing grants, and burial and plot allowances, for which Congress has regularly enacted legislation to adjust these benefits have had their value seriously eroded. Unless the amounts of disability compensation, DIC, and clothing allowance are periodically adjusted, inflation diminishes the significance and effectiveness of these benefits.

Again, I want to thank you for your continued effort to protect and enhance the benefits and services of veterans who are disabled by virtue of their selfless sacrifice and service to our nation, and their dependents.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE,  
*National Legislative Director.*

AMVETS,  
*Lanham, MD, May 22, 2006.*

Hon. JOE KNOLLENBERG,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE KNOLLENBERG: On behalf of AMVETS (American Veterans), I want to thank you for your legislation that will provide a timely and guaranteed cost-of-living adjustment for our nation's disabled veterans.

AMVETS endorses your legislation to automatically increase veterans' disability benefits by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year, without an act of Congress. It is important VA benefits keep pace with society and the cost of living. Your bill will see that veterans' benefits are increased proportionately and will sustain the same buying power as in previous years.

AMVETS supports our nation's commitment to care for the men and women who have served in our military service. I strongly encourage the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to act favorably on this legislation.

Sincerely,

JAMES B. KING,  
*National Executive Director.*

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 19, 2006, I was absent for votes as I was honored to give the commencement address to the 2006 graduating class at Monroe Academy in Monroeville, Alabama. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcalls 173, 174, and 176. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall 175.

#### TRIBUTE TO "WE THE PEOPLE" AND EAST KENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the "We the People" program. From April 29 to May 1, 2006, approximately 1,200 students from across the country participated in the national finals competition of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. I am pleased to announce that East Kentwood High School from Kentwood, Michigan, received the Unit 3 Award in the competition. The "We the People" program is administered by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education by act of Congress.

The "We the People" national finals is a 3-day academic competition that simulates a congressional hearing in which the students "testify" before a panel of judges on constitutional topics. Students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles as they evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues. Among the questions students responded to in this year's competition were: "How would you distinguish a federal system from a unitary government and from a confederation?" and "What did the Framers hope to achieve by establishing a federal system of government?"

The following outstanding students represented East Kentwood High School: Mark Alonso, Sefik Arapovic, Tyler Boyd, Michelle